



Map courtesy of the Open Space Institute

Starting Location: Philipstown Recreation Center, 107 Glenclyffe, Garrison, NY 10524.

Parking is available at the Open Space Institute Lot and the Philipstown Recreation Center Parking Lot.

From the Recreation Center parking lot, walk south. Proceed down a steep gravel path on the left towards a pond, and then follow this trail to the right. In the bamboo forest you will see a kiosk. Follow the numbers and read the corresponding text at each stop, proceeding clockwise around the loop.

1. Setting the Stage

On this History Hike, you will learn why Benedict Arnold was driven to betray the Patriots during the American Revolution and how a prominent Hudson Highlands landowner aided Arnold's mission. The path you're walking follows the Beverley Dock Road which connected the Beverley Robinson house to a dock on the Hudson River. On the morning of September 25, 1780, Benedict Arnold fled down this road to reach British lines before his treason was discovered. The British had been in control of New York City and Long Island since the autumn of 1776. From the stronghold of West Point, the Americans controlled the Hudson River north of New York City. Westchester County was a barrier between the two strongholds, largely controlled by the Americans but with at least 50% of the population considered Loyalists. The area that is now West Point Military Academy helped protect the New England colonies, and also enabled George Washington to supply his troops with food.

2. Kiosk—Benedict Arnold

As a boy born to a wealthy family who had fallen on hard times, Arnold always believed that he deserved more. At 21, he began a trading business in the Atlantic and the Caribbean. But just as he gained success in this venture, the British began enforcing laws prohibiting direct trade between the colonies and the French West Indies, policies that had gone unenforced for years. Arnold joined the Sons of Liberty in 1766, not because he supported American independence, but because he resented the growing British influence in American trading. By 1776, Arnold was among the most senior Brigadier Generals in the army, but he was initially passed up for promotion to Major General. When he was promoted, it was without the seniority over other generals that Arnold felt he deserved. In a direct challenge to authority, Arnold threatened to resign in July 1777 to try and force Congress to reinstate his seniority. Washington denied his request.



Benedict Arnold

Arnold played a pivotal role in the ensuing Battle of Saratoga, but his most successful attack against the British was unauthorized. During the charge, Arnold was knocked from his horse and badly broke his left leg. In the aftermath his superiors did not acknowledge Arnold's contribution, furthering his sense that he was unappreciated.

This injury left Arnold unfit for the field, and he was appointed Military Governor of Philadelphia in the spring of 1778. There, Arnold grew close to prominent Loyalist-leaning families, including the Shippens, a wealthy Quaker family of politicians and merchants. Arnold fell in love with the family's eighteen-year-old daughter Margaret 'Peggy' Shippen.

Arnold had previously been married to Margaret Mansfield, but she died in 1775. Since then Arnold had been



Margaret 'Peggy' Shippen

looking to remarry, and Peggy Shippen's familial wealth would help in his climb towards high society.

To gain her family's consent, Arnold lied about his wealth, and used his military post to make questionable business deals. For instance, in the spring of 1778, Arnold granted a Loyalist merchant a pass to sail from Philadelphia, despite knowing Congress was about to place an embargo on the port against Loyalist ships. Arnold then invested in the Loyalist's merchant vessels. This did not last long. In the spring of 1779, Arnold was court martialed for this business deal by Pennsylvania's governing body, the Supreme Executive Council.

Meanwhile, Arnold went into debt to acquire a mansion in Philadelphia for Peggy. This purchase secured her father's consent, and they married in April 1779. Now part of a Loyalist family, Arnold sent a messenger to New York with an offer of services to the British. He believed his betrayal gave him the best chance for personal success and would resolve his poor finances.

Peggy would ultimately play a key role in Arnold's plot. During the British occupation of Philadelphia a few years earlier, she had befriended British Captain John André. Arnold reached out to André and proceeded to pass information in code to the British for over a year.

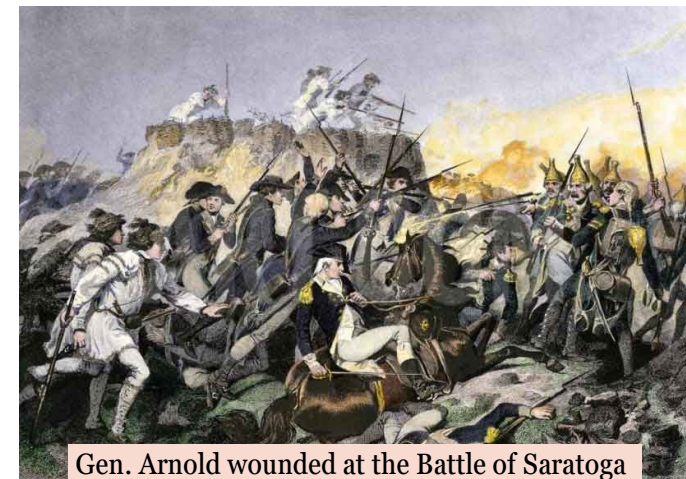
Arnold's intelligence had a direct impact on the British taking Charleston, South Carolina in 1780, but he wanted to be seen as more than a common spy. Still healing his leg from the Battle of Saratoga two years earlier, Arnold sought a position in the Continental Army that would allow him to exchange a valuable prize for a valuable reward.



John André

Any lingering doubts Arnold had over his betrayal were dismissed in January 1780 when Arnold's court martial officially convicted him of misconduct. The sentence was a public reprimand from George Washington, who begrudgingly issued the statement. Arnold now considered Washington his enemy. Delivering West Point to the British would be Arnold's revenge. In June 1780, Arnold toured West Point and sent a potential plan for a British attack on the Fort to André, who was now a General in the British Army and head of British secret intelligence.

Meanwhile, Peggy charmed NY Congressman Robert Livingston Jr., a wealthy Hudson Valley landowner who was close to Washington. At Peggy's request, he



Gen. Arnold wounded at the Battle of Saratoga

contacted Washington suggesting Arnold for commander of West Point. These efforts succeeded, and Arnold was appointed commander of West Point on August 3, 1780.

3. Culvert — Beverley Robinson

Continue on the path (downhill) alongside the stream until you come to a large metal culvert. Cross the water, then pause.

Arnold only served as commander of West Point for 52 days. West Point's only weak spots were the high hills surrounding it. This is why redoubts and defensive forts were built in rings around the main fort. When Arnold arrived, these defenses were in bad shape, and Arnold delayed repair work. To keep his family away from his planned British invasion, Arnold took up residence across the river, at the home of Loyalist Beverley Robinson.

Originally from Virginia, Robinson moved to New York and married Susannah Philipse. As an heir to the Philipse family, Susannah owned property on the eastern shore of the Hudson River that encompasses the land you've been walking through. It ran from just north of St. Philips Church down to Anthony's Nose. The house was destroyed in a fire in 1892, but its location is still preserved by a historical marker on Route 9D. After the British took control of New York City in 1776, Robinson refused to sign an oath of allegiance to the American cause and his land was confiscated by the Continental army. He settled in New York City and used his knowledge of the area to spy for the British cause.



Beverley Robinson

4. Dock Overlook — Act of Treason

Continue on this trail until you come to a ‘T’ with a sign for the overlook. Follow the sign to the left. You will see a marsh-like area and the Hudson River divided by the railroad tracks. Be mindful of the cliff’s edge. The marsh was once a cove that held Beverley’s Dock (before the railroad was built).

With Arnold in control of West Point, he contacted André to arrange an in-person meeting to finalize their plot. There were extensive negotiations about the details of the meeting’s location and logistics, and two failed attempts to meet. Finally, on the night of September 21st, André left the British ship, the *Vulture*, and was rowed to a secluded dock two miles south of Haverstraw. Arnold rode to meet him.



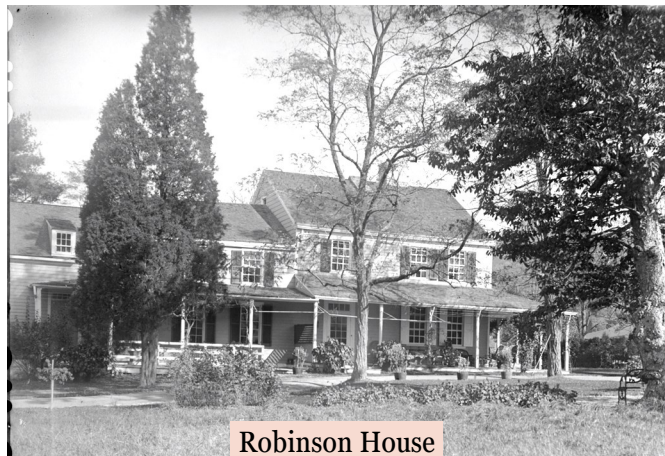
The Tempter & The Traitor

André was in his British uniform, refusing to come in disguise as Arnold had asked because if captured, he would be tried as a spy and hanged instead of held as a prisoner of war. The plan to capture West Point was agreed upon, but Arnold’s payment became an issue. He wanted to be paid even if the plot failed. The men debated the issue until dawn was approaching. It was unsafe to row back to the *Vulture* in daylight, so André and Arnold rode to the house of Loyalist Joshua Hett Smith in Haverstraw, who had been assisting Arnold.

While the men were having breakfast, the *Vulture* was fired upon from across the river at modern day Croton Point. An American officer had brought artillery to the area after noticing the British ship. The *Vulture* fled downriver, stranding André behind American lines.

Arnold was not overly concerned. He left the details of André’s escape to Joshua Hett Smith and provided passes for André to travel under the fake name John Anderson. Traveling by disguise is exactly what André wanted to avoid, and to make matters worse, Arnold forced him to carry plans of West Point’s defenses to the British as proof of Arnold’s services.

When Arnold returned to Beverley Robinson’s house and received news that a large detachment of the British army had mobilized in New York City, he



Robinson House

believed he had won.

Three days later on the morning of September 25th, Washington decided to inspect the redoubts, delaying his arrival at Beverley House where he was going to visit. Arnold was eating breakfast when he received a message from Westchester, reporting that John Anderson (André) had been captured and his plans for West Point were on their way to Washington.

Arnold raced for Beverley’s dock, down the path you have been walking, boarded his barge, and ordered his oarsmen to row downriver towards the *Vulture*. 90-minutes later Arnold boarded the ship, where he was greeted by Beverley Robinson. The *Vulture* departed for New York City as Arnold pondered his future.

5. River Overlook—André’s Capture

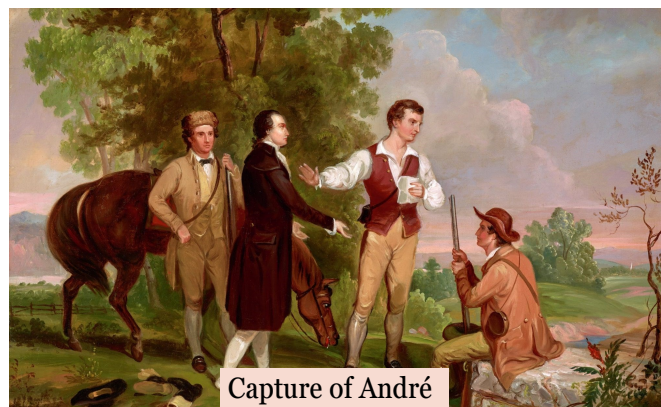
Return to the ‘T’ but head north, following along the river and the railroad. Stop at any of the overlooks to the left to read. In the distance, across the river, you will see the West Point Military Academy. After that, you may go back the way you came or continue to follow the trail to the north, but be aware of the steep hill. If you follow the trail, once you emerge onto the driveway turn right to return to the parking lot.

Two days before Arnold’s flight, John André was nearing the British lines close to Tarrytown when he was confronted by three armed men, John Paulding, David Williams, and Isaac Van Wart.

Believing they were allies, he identified himself as a British officer and then gave them Arnold’s pass. But upon hearing André was with the British, the men searched him and found the West Point documents, discovering André was a spy. He offered them very large bribes, which the men took to mean he was a high-ranking man. They refused and brought André to the Continental Headquarters in Westchester.

Attempts to save André’s life were made by Arnold, Beverley Robinson, and British Commander in Chief

Clinton, but being caught as a spy, and with plans to West Point, sealed his fate. André was hanged on October 2, 1780.



Capture of André

Epilogue: Peggy and Arnold

Peggy’s role in Arnold’s treason was not discovered until the 1930s because of her masterful performance following Arnold’s flight. She immediately cleaned out her bedroom and burned letters she had sent to André. Then she began screaming. Aids entered the room and Peggy pleaded for her child’s life, claiming Washington planned to murder him.

Eventually Washington arrived. Peggy had known him for most of her life. The General assured her that she and her child were safe. After this exchange he never suspected that Peggy was guilty. She continued the charade by going to join her family in Philadelphia rather than meeting Arnold in New York City. But this plan backfired when she was banished from the state of Pennsylvania for her connection to Arnold. She was sent to her husband in New York City.

Benedict Arnold served with the British for the remainder of the war, but André’s death meant that he would never be treated with respect in British society. The Arnold family moved between London and Canada after the war as Arnold attempted to make a living through a trading business. He died a poor man in London in 1801.



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